THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. In Krishna Nagar a Head Post Office is functioning. Krishna Nagar Bazar Sub Post Office was temporarily shifted from the rented building due to a vacation order passed by the District Court. As no suitable alternate accommodation is available in the area, this Sub Post Office continues to operate from Krishna Nagar Head Post Office which is functioning in a departmental building.

**Monthly sugar quota**

983. SHRI ABANI ROY:
SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to reduce the monthly sugar quota *w.e.f.* August,2003;

(b) whether such a decision has created an artificial shortage and increased the prices of sugar to Rs. 250 per quintal;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether Government propose to bring down the prices of sugar in the open market immediately and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD):(a) to (d) The monthly quota of non-levy sugar is decided keeping in view the various factors like sugar production, requirement/demand, availability of alternate sweetners like gur and khandsari, price trend of sugar in the market etc. The total quantity of non-levy sugar released month-wise from August, 2003 to December, 2003 *vis-a-vis* the releases made in the corresponding months of 2002 as under:

| Month | Non-levy sugar quota released (quantity in lakh tonne) | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2003 | 2002 |
| August | 9.50 | 9.75 |
| September | 10.45 | 9.75 |
| October | 12.65 | 11.50 |
| November | 10.50 | 10.50 |
| December | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| TOTAL: | 53.10 | 51.50 |

The prices of sugar were in the range of Rs. 1200—1400 per quintal during the month of November, 2003 as against Rs.1160—1340 per quintal during the corre ponding month of 2002. In addition to the factors mentioned above, monthly quota of non-levy sugar is decided keeping in view its availability to the consumers at a reasonable price.

**Availability of rail rakes**

984. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's large wheat stocks, which many countries are prepared to buy, have failed to make any large impact on the global trade due to shortage of rail rakes; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take for easy availability of rail rakes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA):(a) and (b) No, Sir. FCI has sold a quantity of 176.81 lakh MT of wheat to the Public Sector Undertakings/Private Exporters as on 31.10.2003 since November, 2000 for export purposes as per the directions of the Government.

The rail rakes for transportation of export foodgrains are provided as per the indents registered, on their turn and priority. Preference is given for the transportation of foodgrains for PDS and other welfare schemes.